

VETERAN HEALTH EDUCATION NEWS

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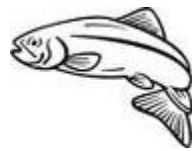
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Should I take an Omega-3 Supplement?



By Jennifer Cross, MS, RD

For an optimal wellness nutrition plan, a balanced intake of the essential fatty acids Omega-3 and Omega-6 are an important component. The body does not produce its own omega-3 fatty acids, nor can the body make omega-3 fatty acids from omega-6 fatty acids, which are common in the Western diet. Omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to have many benefits including decreasing high triglycerides and risk of heart disease. Research also shows possible benefits in conditions such as high blood pressure, rheumatoid arthritis, stroke, kidney problems, high cholesterol and many more. The recommended dosage of Omega-3s is: 1.6g/day (1600mg) for men and 1.1g/day (1100mg) for women of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), and 0.5 to 1.8g/day (500 to 1800mg) of DHA and/or EPA.

Food sources that are rich in Omega-3s and can be added to a healthy diet include:

- Flaxseeds
- Walnuts
- Salmon
- Halibut
- Soybeans
- Sardines

As with many supplements, taking more is not always more beneficial. If you are interested in starting an Omega supplement, please consult with your doctor to assess the health benefits and recommended dosage based on your medical conditions.

Health Benefits of Nuts

By Kristi Newberry, RD, LD



Most people avoid incorporating nuts such as almonds, cashews, walnuts, and peanuts into their regular diet because they tend to be high in salt and calories. Including nuts in a regular diet has been shown to be beneficial for various diseases and conditions such as heart disease. Recently, research has shown that eating nuts can help to reduce LDL cholesterol levels, which helps to maintain a healthy heart. Nuts contain omega-3 fatty acids which are also found in oily fish such as salmon. When including nuts in your diet you want to try and avoid the salted or flavored varieties because of the sodium content. Too much sodium can negatively affect your heart and discount the benefits of the nuts. Look for dry roasted or smoked varieties, as well as unsalted varieties of nuts. Pay close attention the serving size when eating nuts. The serving size of nuts is 1 ounce (about 1 small handful). All the omega-3 health benefits will still be found in that handful. Nuts all have different levels of the beneficial omega-3 fatty acids, so choose several different types on a regular basis or select a mixed variety. Nuts with the highest levels of the healthy omega-3 fatty acids are walnuts and pecans. Adding nuts to a mixed salad or taking nuts with dried fruit as a snack are great ways to add omega-3 to your diet.

Banana Walnut Breakfast Shake

Ingredients

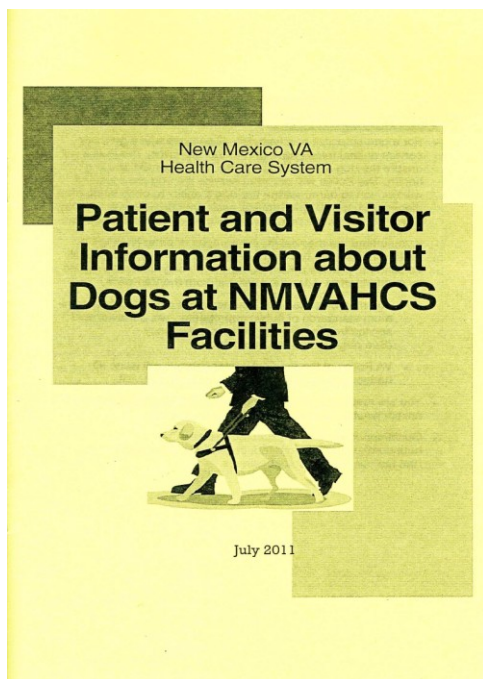
- 1 medium very ripe banana, frozen
- 1/2 cup vanilla low-fat yogurt
- 1/4 cup chopped California walnuts
- 1-2 tablespoons honey

Directions

1. Place banana, yogurt, walnuts, and 1 tablespoon honey in a blender.

2. Blend on low speed until ingredients start to mix together. Then increase to high speed and blend until smooth.
3. TIP: To make a frozen banana, peel and cut the banana into chunks. Wrap in plastic and place in freezer several hours or overnight.

Calories: 267 Total Fat: 11 g Saturated Fat: 2 g Monounsaturated Fat: 2 g Polyunsaturated Fat: 7 g Trans Fat: 0 g Cholesterol: 3 mg Sodium: 42 mg



New Booklet Available for Patients and Visitors with Dogs

By William Armstrong, public Affairs Specialist

We have printed and distributed copies of a new booklet for patients and visitors who wish to bring a dog into one of our facilities. You'll find these booklets at the following locations: Information Desk (Bldg. 41), Patient Advocate Office, SCI Reception Desk, Bldg. 1 Check-in Windows, VA Police Office, and soon at the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics. **If you have questions, please call the VA Police before you bring your dog to a VA facility, at (505) 265-1711, ext. 4222.**

A FAMILIAR STORY

By Mary Ann Kreski, Caregiver Support Coordinator

Henry is 85 years old, a World War II Veteran now contending with diabetes that has dimmed his vision and weakened his legs. Yesterday, he fell outside when he went for the newspaper. He had no other choice but to find a way to get back on his feet---because Emma was alone inside the house.

Henry and Emma married in 1948. With no children, they were especially close. These days, Emma prepared dinner as she had every evening for 63 years, except Henry had to remember to turn off the stove for her. At times, she thought Henry might be the man next door, especially when the sun went down. Emma was battling dementia, and Henry struggled to care for her at home. Sleepless nights were increasing, and fatigue dogged Henry's days.

Is this your story? Or the life lived by someone you know? If you are a Veteran caring for a spouse, child, sibling, or friend the VA Caregiver Support Program may be able to help.

VA offers resources for Veterans who are cared for in the home, but also for those Veterans caring for others. The VA Caregiver Support Line is available 6 days per week, and every VA Medical Center has a Caregiver Support Coordinator who can connect you with both VA and community resources to help your loved one and to help you take care of yourself. The choices available may include respite care, adult day care, caregiver support groups, help in the home, education and retreats, or simply someone to listen.

The National VA Caregiver Support Line can be reached Monday through Saturday at 1-855-260-3274. Or you may call Mary Ann Kreski, the Caregiver Support Coordinator at the Albuquerque VAMC directly, Monday through Friday at 505-265-1711 x 7218. You make it possible for your loved one to live at home---now it's time to take care of you.

MyCD (Chronic Disease Self Management Program)

By Christine Stevens, Veteran Health Education Coordinator

Would you like to put some life back into your life?

Are you someone with a chronic disease or condition?

Do you take care of someone with a chronic disease or condition?

You are invited to attend the MyCD program.

For more information/registration, please contact Christine Stevens @ 265-1711 ext. 4941



Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) —

A team in which each Veteran works together with health care professionals to plan for whole-person care and lifelong health and wellness. Along with VA, the New Mexico VA Health Care System is currently undertaking one of the biggest cultural change efforts in recent history. Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) are being implemented at all VA Primary Care Sites, including our Community Based Outpatient Clinics. The **goal** of PACT is to improve Primary Care delivery by increasing access, coordination of care, continuity of care and improving communication.



What is a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT)?

PACT is a patient-driven, team-based approach to providing total health care and delivers efficient, comprehensive and continuous care through active communication and coordination of resources. It puts the relationship with the provider and the team at the center of the patient's care. The principles of PACT include having an ongoing relationship with a Primary Care Provider, whole person orientation of care, enhanced access to care and coordination of care across the entire health care system.

Each patient will be at the center of a "teamlet", which will include a Primary Care Provider, RN Care Manager, LPN/Health-tech and a Medical Support Assistant (MSA). This teamlet is supported by a broader "Team" which includes social workers, dietitians, pharmacists, mental health providers and case managers.

PACT will improve coordination of inpatient to outpatient care, primary care to specialty care and VA and non-VA co-managed care. The RN Care Manager and teamlet will assist the patient across all spectrums of care.

The Patient Aligned Care Team is just one more way VA Health care is "Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century."

For more information On the Web – go to www.va.gov/PrimaryCare/pact